

**MARINE INFORMATION****DISCONTINUANCE OF 121.5 AND 243 MHZ FOR SATELLITE DISTRESS ALERTS**

The Cospas-Sarsat Program has announced plans to terminate satellite processing of distress signals from 121.5 and 243 MHz emergency beacons on February 1, 2009. Users of the system will have to switch to emergency beacons operating at 406 MHz, which are more reliable and provide search and rescue agencies complete information that they need to do their job, in order to be detected by satellites.

Reasons for the Cospas-Sarsat program to discontinue use is driven by guidance from the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). These two agencies are responsible for regulating the safety of ships and aircraft on international transits and handle international standards for maritime and aeronautical search and rescue missions. In addition, 121.5 MHz false alerts inundate search and rescue resources which impact the effectiveness of lifesaving services.

Individuals who plan on buying a new distress beacon may wish to take the Cospas-Sarsat decision into account.